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Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 3 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions of my Government, I have the honour to request that the statement delivered by the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, at the inauguration of the Regional High-level Consultation on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment held in Managua on 25 and 26 June 2007, should be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 113 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Mario H. **Castellón Duarte**
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Annex to the letter dated 3 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Nicaragua to the United Nations

The Time for Sweeping Change is at Hand!

Statement by the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, at the inauguration of the Regional High-level Consultation on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment

25 June 2007

Good morning people of Nicaragua, distinguished representatives of fellow Member States of the United Nations, honourable members of the diplomatic corps, colleagues in the Nicaraguan Cabinet.

It is a great honour for Nicaragua to host this meeting, this consultation, this reflection on development issues within the United Nations system.

I watched the opening of the event earlier this morning on television and heard the inaugural address delivered by Mr. Samuel Santos, as well as the statement made by the Minister of Development of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr. Bert Kenders, who has displayed considerable interest and commitment with regard to this meeting. I have also had the opportunity to briefly examine the notes I received on the various statements made during the course of the morning.

One of the speakers stressed the importance of the Doha Summit, its significance in the past and what it means today, as well as the expectations the meeting has generated. Basically, the very foundations of a system that was erected at the end of the Second World War is being called into question given that now, in the twenty-first century, it seems to be completely overwhelmed and has obviously run its course.

Fair terms of trade must be established and the world economy must be truly democraticized in order to ensure that efforts such as those undertaken at this meeting today to improve the coherence of the United Nations system in the area of development can really come to fruition.

We all know that the concept of sustainability has yet to be incorporated into the development model. At the moment the model does not even contemplate the survival of the human race. In fact, it endangers natural resources and threatens the environment, issues which are today at least beginning to be discussed in the countries and by the governments that have so far refused to sign fundamental treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol.

Global warming and its causes have become the subject of much discussion, and scientists and experts concur that urgent action is needed if we are to stave off the catastrophe now threatening humanity. As much as we would like to see it, however, there has been no real progress in practical terms.

The intransigence of those who continue to defend an outdated, pro-development, pro-consumption model that runs counter to the vital interests of humankind was patently clear at the recent meeting of the Group of Seven Plus One in Europe, but so was the cry of alarm voiced by other countries belonging to that same outmoded scheme of global capitalism which has been imposing its rules and establishing the norms over the years and preaching democracy without practising it.

Without democracy in economic and trade relations, without sweeping reforms to this model that is draining humankind, well-intentioned proposals such as those under discussion at this meeting today will have little room to flourish. Because in the end, changing the development model is the proposal that really interests the vast majority of us: the peoples and nations that have a voice but do not have a vote.

As we all know, with the invasion of Iraq, the United Nations ran out of steam: it lost its credibility and its confidence. We now have a system that is suffering from political, economic and commercial exhaustion. Sweeping changes need to be introduced. This will mean democraticizing relations between the countries of the North and the South and democraticizing the United Nations system to the core.

We need to consider what it means to ensure the fairness and equity of economic and trade relations and to establish a system in which barriers are torn down, protectionism and subsidies are dismantled, and the instruments used by global capitalism to prolong and maintain an already outmoded scheme are replaced with new ones that reflect the will of the peoples of the world and respond to the historic demands being made at this juncture in time.

Here in Latin America we are undergoing a process that fills us with hope. Our peoples are seeking to come closer, to move from integration to unity. Latin America and the Caribbean will thus become what it truly should be: an economic, social and cultural power.

In Nicaragua today, many hopes and expectations for the future of our country are unfolding. With the greatest confidence, we are joining plans for Latin American and Caribbean unity, the most advanced of which is ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean), whose members are the brother countries Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua.

We are attempting to make progress in the Central American integration process. All Central Americans still do not dare to speak of unity, and a customs union has become the main obstacle to progress in advancing the integration process.

Nicaraguans aspire to integration and I am sure that the Central American peoples aspire to it as well and that it will lead to unity. The process requires the establishment of a Compensation Fund so that our fragile and impoverished economies can truly choose progress and development.

Indisputably, the cost of this fund must be borne by those who now control the wealth of humanity; history shows that they owe a debt to the African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean peoples.

We are not going to review the history and significance of capitalism as founded by those who colonized Africa and enslaved African peoples for over 300 years and who colonized America and subjugated our indigenous peoples to the point of extermination in many regions, plundering our indigenous peoples and our riches!

They now have the privilege of owning this capital, and have strengthened and expanded it through new forms of domination. They stubbornly cling to a consumerist development model that remains exploitative, putting the inhabitants of developed countries themselves at risk. Global warming, the result of the avarice of capitalism, has no regard for race, colour or creed — it will destroy both rich and poor alike.

We are convinced that these are times when peoples and governments are called to step forward and take transcendent decisions that will allow them to bridge the ever-widening chasm which threatens all of us.

We believe in the efforts we are making in Central America, the Caribbean and South America, to seek both integration and unity through various structures, taking into account that a democratic process — the term has become so fashionable in our times! — is not viable if that democracy is not expressed in the economic and social field.

Democracy cannot be limited strictly to the electoral realm, where the people vote every so many years, then are subjected to economic policies that rob them of encouragement and hope, and moreover, frustrate them through the political electoral process.

True progress towards democracy with justice, equity and solidarity will only be possible to the extent that the peoples of the country of the North and of the South, who are becoming increasingly aware, can come together and ensure that the warning calls proliferating on our planet are strong enough that the leaders of the developed countries and global capitalism, who direct international organizations to execute policies which have nothing to do with equity, justice and solidarity, can hear once and for all that the time has come for sweeping change.

This century must be a new century not only on the calendar but in the actions of global leadership so that we can live in a world truly at peace, with solidarity, justice, freedom from war and with equity.